

COUNTY OF SOMERSET.

CHARD RURAL DISTRICT.


A N N U A L     R E P O R T

- OF THE -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

1 9 3 8 .



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COUNTY OF SOMERSET.ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR ENDED31ST DECEMBER, 1938.PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS:

Medical Officer of Health (part time employed), -  
C. C. Court, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector (fully employed), -  
E. Whisker, M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector (fully employed), -  
C. V. Muggeridge, A.R.S.I.

Temporary Assistant to Sanitary Inspector (fully employed), -  
C. F. Hocken.

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TO: THE CHARD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report of the Sanitary Conditions and Vital Statistics of Chard Rural District for the Year ended 31st December, 1938.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

There has been little change in the employment conditions in the area. The Tail Mill Factory at Merriott, which had been out of use for some time, was taken over by an engineering firm, which is employing some local labour.

There are no unhealthy occupations in the area.

STATISTICAL MEMORANDA.

Area of District .....	54,600 acres.
Population (Estimated Mid. 1938) .....	11,050.
Number of inhabited Houses .....	3,300.
Rateable Value .....	£38,458.
Sum represented by a penny rate .....	£167 (net).

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Total.	Male.	Female.	
Live Births:				
Legitimate.	151	75	76	) <u>Birth Rate per 1000 population.</u>
Illegitimate.	3	2	1	
Total	154	77	77	
				13.9
Still Births:				
Legitimate.	2	1	1	) <u>Still Birth Rate per 1000 population.</u>
Illegitimate.	-	-	-	
Total	2	1	1	
				0.18



There was a considerable increase in the birth rate over that for the preceding 3 years, the rate for 1937 being 12.2 per 1000. It is, however, below the Registrar-General's figure of 15.1 for England and Wales.

DEATHS:

	Total.	Male.	Female.	Death Rate per 1000 population.
<u>All causes:</u>	<u>132</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>11.9</u>
<u>Causes of Death:</u>				
Cancer .....	20	8	12	
Syphilis .....	1	-	1	
Respiratory Tuberculosis ....	1	1	-	
Other Tuberculosis .....	2	1	1	
Influenza .....	1	1	-	
Appendicitis .....	2	2	-	
Peptic Ulcer .....	1	1	-	
Pneumonia all forms .....	5	3	2	
Other Respiratory Diseases ..	1	1	-	
Bronchitis .....	5	3	2	
Cerebral Haemorrhage .....	7	4	3	
Heart Disease .....	32	15	17	
Aneurism .....	1	1	-	
Other Circulatory Diseases ..	6	3	3	
Diabetes .....	2	1	1	
Nephritis Acute & Chronic ...	1	-	1	
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth &c.....	4	-	4	
Senility .....	11	4	7	
Digestive Diseases .....	5	2	3	
Suicide .....	1	-	1	
Other Violence .....	9	8	1	
Other defined diseases .....	14	7	7	
<u>Total</u>	<u>132</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>66</u>	

The Death Rates have fallen since last year. After multiplying with the Comparability Factor for comparison with the Registrar-General's figures for England and Wales the rate for this district is 9.75 as compared with the figure for England and Wales of 11.6 per 1000 population.

Deaths of Infants under 1 year:

Legitimate .....	4	-	4
Illegitimate .....	1	-	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>

Death rate of Infants per 1,000 Live Births. 31.9

Death rate per 1,000 Live Births England & Wales. 53.0

Deaths of Infants under 1 year divided as follows:-

Under one week .....	2
1 - 4 weeks .....	2
1 - 6 months .....	1
6 - 12 months .....	0
<u>Total under 1 year</u>	<u>5</u>





Deaths from Measles - all ages .....Nil.

Deaths from Whooping Cough .....Nil.

Deaths from Diarrhoea - under 2 years .....Nil.

Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis .....Nil.

The year 1938 was a healthy year for this district. There was no epidemic of Influenza during the early part of the year which is very unusual, a few mild cases only occurred. There was a corresponding drop in the death rate over 1937 when a widespread epidemic of Influenza was experienced.

#### SCHOOLS.

The Elementary Schools in the area have been regularly inspected by the Sanitary Inspector and myself and any defects in sanitation discovered have been brought to the notice of the Education Authorities.

Three Schools were closed for varying short periods during the year by order of the Local Authority owing to outbreaks of Scarlet Fever.

The presence of suspected cases of infectious disease amongst School Children is notified by the Head Teachers to the Medical Officer of Health, who confirms the existence or otherwise of the condition existing and gives the necessary instructions to the Head Teacher.

#### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

These remain unaltered from my previous reports.

#### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

##### WATER SUPPLIES:

During the year samples have been taken at frequent intervals from the Council's public supplies for bacteriological examination, including samples taken from the Regional Scheme at Dommett Farm, and from the Tatworth and Forton (Chard Parish) Scheme, and also from the under-mentioned village supplies belonging to the Council, viz:-

Buckland St. Mary;  
Chaffcombe;  
Combe St. Nicholas;  
Winsham.

The reports were satisfactory in all cases.

Samples were also taken from the under-mentioned supplies not belonging to the District Council, viz:-

<u>Parish.</u>	<u>Owners of Supply.</u>	<u>Date of examination.</u>	<u>Report.</u>
Hinton St. George.	Hinton St. George Estates Company.	19/9/1938.	No evidence of contamination and the results are satisfactory.
Kenny Supply.	Lord Portman.	23/2/1938.	No evidence of contamination and the results are satisfactory.





### Water Supplies (Continued):

A number of samples were also taken from privately-owned wells in various parts of the District.

### New Schemes:

HEWISH, WEST CREWKERNE: Scheme approved and loan of £950 sanctioned 19th October, 1937. The works were completed in February, 1938. Asbestos mains laid throughout the hamlet and water laid on to 20 houses.

A sample taken on 24/10/1938 was reported by the Analyst as showing marked evidence of contamination and as it seemed that the unsatisfactory report was due to water from the road entering the well a clay dam was formed around the well and a subsequent sample was reported as being quite satisfactory.

### Supervision of Supplies:

The Council have now provided piped water supplies to 21 parishes out of a total of 30 and the Sanitary Inspector is responsible for the management of all the water undertakings, acting in close co-operation with the Medical Officer of Health.

A Waterworks Bailiff is also employed to supervise connections &c., and to assist in the maintenance of the undertakings under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector.

### Ministry of Health Inquiries.

No Ministry of Health Inquiries have been held during the year.

### Closet Accommodation.

Number of conservancy closets converted to the water carriage system -

25 closets, providing accommodation for 27 premises.

### Scavenging.

A scheme for the regular collection and disposal of House Refuse from 12 parishes was instituted in February, 1938. Haulage is carried out by contract. Disposal is by the "Controlled" tipping method and is working satisfactorily.

### Rivers and Streams.

There is no marked contamination of Rivers and Streams in the area. A certain amount of sewage is discharged into streams in two villages which is undesirable. The problem has been considered on several occasions by the Council, but owing to the low lying position of the villages, the cost of a new sewage system would be extremely high.

### Drainage and Sewerage:

#### Chard Parish (Tatworth and Perry Street).

A loan of £7,800 was sanctioned in December, 1937, and work was begun on a new Sewerage System for this large scattered parish, in January, 1938, and completed in October, 1938. Several extensions have since been made, for which a supplementary loan of £1,450 was sanctioned in October, 1938. Considerable difficulty has been



encountered with these works, partly owing to the excess of spring water which still finds it's way into the old connections, but mainly from the fact that the land has not proved to be of the porous nature which the preliminary examination and tests predicted. This has caused irrigation to be far from satisfactory, and the Council is now giving consideration to the provision of one or more rotary filters to assist in treatment of the effluent on leaving the sedimentation tanks.

### Merriott.

The irrigation system has been reconstructed under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector, and the effluent is now quite satisfactory.

### Supervision of Sewage Disposal Works, &c..

A caretaker under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector is employed for the maintenance of all sewage undertakings.

### SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

Number of premises visited during the year -  
 Primary inspections .....477  
 Re-inspections .....213  
 Visits on other sanitary matters, exclusive of  
 above and also exclusive of housing inspections....787  
 Reports made on results of inspections ..... 91  
 Number of defects or nuisances remedied ..... 85  
 Number of Informal Notices served in respect of  
 80 premises ..... 77  
 Number of nuisances remedied as result of Notices .. 75

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

#### Meat:

Number of Slaughter-houses in the District ..... 26  
 (a) Licensed ..... 11  
 (b) Registered ..... 15

Number of inspections of Slaughter-houses and  
 Butcher's premises .....296

Meat condemned during the year :-

<u>Pigs:</u>	Heads 19.	Internal Organs 17.	Carcases 7.
<u>Sheep:</u>	Do. -	Do. Do. 9.	Do. 3.
<u>Oxen:</u>	Do. 8.	Do. Do. 31.	Do. 11.

One successful prosecution under Section 117 of the Public Health Act, 1875, and Articles 9 and 10 of the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.

#### Milk Supply:

Accredited Milk Producers ..... 32  
 Tuberculin Tested Milk Producers ..... 6  
 Number of Producers on Register .....547





Distributors divided as follows :-

(a) Distributors only .....	2
(b) Distributors who are also producers .....	58
Dairies inspected .....	149
Do. re-inspected .....	35
Number of Cowstalls subject to alterations and improvements .....	35
Number of new Cowstalls erected .....	6
Number of Milk Samples taken and forwarded to the County Laboratory for Bacteriological analysis for Tubercle Bacilli .....	21
Number of Milk Samples taken under Milk (Special Designations) Order .....	130

### HOUSING.

#### Council Houses:

The repairs and maintenance of the Council's 247 houses was taken over by the Sanitary Inspector's Department in October, 1938, and an Additional Inspector was appointed for this work.

The Housing Conditions in the area improve steadily year by year. Overcrowding never excessive has been relieved, and "Slum Clearance" progresses, the houses being dealt with individually, being inspected in detail by the Sanitary Inspectors and afterwards by the Medical Officer of Health and Members of the Housing Committee. There is a need for accommodation on a smaller scale than the average Council house for elderly couples and single persons, and the Council has this matter under consideration.

#### Number of new houses erected during the year :-

(i) By Local Authority - with State Assistance:	
(a) Rehousing under Housing Act, 1936.....	19
(b) Overcrowding.....	Nil.
(c) Other .....	Nil.
Without State Assistance.....	18
(ii) By other bodies or persons:	
(a) With State Assistance .....	Nil.
(b) Without State Assistance.....	22

#### Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :-

1. (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts).....	348
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose.....	371
2. (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 .....	171
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ....	198
(c) Number of houses in which no action was found necessary .....	94
3. Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation .....	49





4. Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in a ll respects reasonably fit for human habitation .....170

Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices:-

- (a) Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ..... 80  
 (b) Number of houses demolished voluntarily or in consequence of informal action ..... 2

Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :-

A. Proceedings under sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ..... 4  
 (2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:  
     (a) By owners ..... 4  
     (b) By Local Authority in default of owners ..... Nil.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied..... Nil.  
 (2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-  
     (a) By owners..... Nil.  
     (b) By Local Authority in default of owners..... Nil.

C. Proceedings under sections 11, 13 and 26 of the Housing Act, 1936:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made..... 25  
 (2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders..... 15  
 (3) (a) Clearance Orders made..... Nil.  
     (b) Number of houses involved..... Nil.  
 (4) Clearance Orders confirmed  
     (a) Number of houses involved..... Nil.  
     (b) Number of houses demolished..... Nil.  
     (c) Number of houses to be demolished..... Nil.

D. Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:

- (1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made..... Nil.  
 (2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit..... Nil.



Housing Act, 1936. - Part IV. - Overcrowding.

- (a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year..... 8
- (ii) Number of families dwelling therein..... 8
- (iii) Number of persons dwelling therein.....60
- (b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year.....Nil.
- (c) (i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year..... 10
- (ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases..... 83
- (d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding.....Nil.
- (e) Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions upon which the Medical Officer of Health may consider it desirable to report.....Nil.

CAMPING SITES.

There are no regular Camps in use in this district up to date. Some farmers, however, take cars and caravans into their fields for a night. All persons who advertise camping sites either by notice boards or other means should be under a legal obligation to register their premises with the Local Sanitary Authority.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS.

There were a certain number of cases of mild Scarlet Fever which occurred in the area from time to time during the year chiefly in the villages of Combe St. Nicholas, Hinton St. George and Clapton (West Crewkerne). Control of these cases was not easy as owing to shortage of isolation hospital accommodation cases had to be treated at home, in some instances, and also the excessively mild type of the disease caused parents to be liable to overlook the fact that a child was suffering from the complaint so that medical aid was not sought in the early stages. I paid a large number of visits to the homes of children on this account and also examined the children present in the schools as well as taking throat swabs for bacteriological examination from cases suspected to be carriers of the disease.

There were four cases of Diphtheria during the year. In one instance I traced the infection of the patient by a series of nose and throat examinations to a mild chronic nasal case living in the same house and unsuspected of being in ill-health. I am satisfied that the infection in this instance was imported from another area where this second case had been employed. Both cases were removed to neighbouring Isolation Hospitals, and there was no further spread of the disease.

There were a few more cases of Sonne<sup>1</sup> Dysentery, the aftermath of the outbreak which occurred in 1937, all were of a mild type.







LIST OF NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES OTHER THAN  
TUBERCULOSIS.

Disease.	Total No. of cases notified.	Cases ad- mitted to Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Smallpox.....	-	-	-
Scarlet Fever.....	33	8	-
Diphtheria.....	4 (1 case proved to be non-virulent).	3	-
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid).	-	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia.....	2	-	-
Ophthalmia Neonatorum.....	-	-	-
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis..	-	-	-
Anterior Poliomyelitis.....	1	1	-
Dysentery Sonne .....	14	-	-
Erysipelas.....	4	-	-
Chickenpox.....	22	-	-
Pneumonia.....	5	1	4
<u>Total</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES OF INFECTIOUS  
DISEASE IN AGE GROUPS.

Disease.	Y e a r s .										
	Under 1 yr.	1- 2	2- 3	3- 4	4- 5	5- 10	10- 15	15- 20	20- 35	35- 45	45 & over.
Scarlet Fever.....		3	2	3	18	4	2	1			
Puerperal Pyrexia.....								2			
Dysentery Sonne'.....			2	1	7	1		2		1	
Diphtheria.....						1	1	2			
Anterior Poliomyelitis.....				1							
Pneumonia.....							1			4	
Erysipelas.....										4	
Chickenpox.....	1	1		3	12		3	2			
<u>Totals</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>9</u>	

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

No new cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum were notified during 1938. A number of follow-up visits were paid to two existing cases, which were found to have completely recovered.

TUBERCULOSIS.

No action has been found necessary under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1935, or under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

The notification of Tuberculosis has been efficiently carried out in the District during the year.



TUBERCULOSIS.  
NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1938.

Age Periods.	New Cases.						Deaths.	
	Respiratory.		Non- Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 Years	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1- "	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
5- "	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
15- "	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
25- "	. 1	. 1	.....	. 1	.....	.....	.....	.....
35- "	. 1	.....	.....	. 1	.....	.....	. 1	.....
45- "	. 1	.....	.....	.....	. 1	.....	.....	.....
55- "	. 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
65- " and up	. 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<u>Totals</u>	5	1	-	2	1	-	1	-

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

These have been inspected and found to be in a satisfactory sanitary condition.

Inspections made :-

Factories with mechanical power....	14
Factories without mechanical power .....	10
	<u>24</u>
Defects found.....	2
Defects remedied.....	2

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

(sd) C. C. COURT,

Medical Officer of Health,  
Chard Rural District Council.

3rd July, 1939.

